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# Security Council

Seventy-second year

*Provisional*

**8053**rd meeting
Thursday, 21 September 2017, 4.30 p.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Negewo | (Ethiopia) |
| *Members*: | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Llorentty Solíz |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yi |
| | Egypt | Mr. Selim |
| | France | Mr. Lemoyne |
| | Italy | Mr. Alfano |
| | Japan | Mr. Kono |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Abdrakhmanov |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzya |
| | Senegal | Mr. Ciss |
| | Sweden | Ms. Wallström |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Klimkin |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Field |
| | United States of America | Mr. Tillerson |
| | Uruguay | Mr. Loedel |

## Agenda

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

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*The meeting was called to order at 4.35 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**

**The President**: I wish to warmly welcome the Ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Republic of Korea to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nakamitsu.

**Ms. Nakamitsu**: I thank you, Sir, for convening this very important meeting today.

The Security Council has been directly engaged in matters relating to weapons of mass destruction for 65 years. This long priority work by the Council has rested on two mutually reinforcing pillars. One derives from the Council's responsibility for establishing a system for the regulation of armaments, as enshrined in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. This objective is closely linked with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and aims to promote international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. The other derives, of course, from the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Pursuant to this responsibility, the Council has sought various aims, including respect for the prohibition of the use of biological and chemical weapons, ensuring compliance with international norms and treaties, preventing non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and addressing specific cases of proliferation.

The Council's engagement on weapons of mass destruction has always been grounded on a common understanding that measures for disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and are mutually reinforcing. The need to pursue both objectives while responding urgently to contemporary proliferation challenges was evident when the Council adopted the resolutions in support of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Similarly, when the Council met for the first time at the level of Heads of State and Government in 1992 (see S/PV.3046), disarmament and arms control were a major focus, and importantly determined that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constituted a threat to international Peace and Security.

The disarmament and non-proliferation efforts of the Council over the past 25 years have achieved important and historic outcomes, even as the international community continues to grapple with isolated cases of proliferation and the unresolved question of disarmament. The Council has made use of a great variety of tools towards these ends. In this regard, I will briefly highlight a number of country-specific and general approaches.

In responding to the invasion of Kuwait in 1991, the Council required Iraq to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programme and mandated on-site inspections towards that end. It has since been confirmed, of course, that those obligations were carried out and the Council has effectively normalized Iraq's international non-proliferation obligations.

With respect to the Iranian nuclear issue, direct engagement and a shared commitment to dialogue and cooperation resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which the Council endorsed in resolution 2231 (2015). Two years later, international inspectors continue to verify the implementation of Iran's nuclear-related commitments. A sustained commitment on the part of all participants remains essential to the long-term viability and success of that historic agreement.

In Libya, timely action by the Council enabled the international inspectors to help the Government secure and remove vulnerable stockpiles of chemical agents.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, successful engagement by the Russian Federation and the United States resulted in that country eliminating its declared chemical weapons programme under United Nations supervision and with unprecedented international cooperation.

Regrettably, we continue to find evidence of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, which we determined has been carried out by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. In order to uphold our shared norms of humanity, all those who have used those weapons must be held to account. The unity and action of the Council remain essential.

Finally, the provocative and dangerous nuclear and ballistic missile activities by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to defy the decisions of the Council and the will of the international community. These acts have also undermined international norms against nuclear proliferation and nuclear testing. The Secretary-General has repeatedly and unequivocally condemned those acts, and called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cease further testing, comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and allow space for the resumption of sincere dialogue on denuclearization. The steady escalation of provocative acts must be immediately reversed. The continued unity of the Council remains essential to facilitate the resumption of diplomacy, leading to a peaceful settlement.

Turning to general approaches on non-proliferation, resolution 1540 (2004) continues to stand as a pioneering achievement in cooperative action to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related material by strengthening national capacities. In maintaining the effectiveness of this instrument, it remains imperative to keep pace with global trends and emerging technologies that continuously lower the threshold for the acquisition and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material.

In concluding this survey, it is apparent that the most effective approaches to non-proliferation must involve a mixture of active, robust and wise diplomacy, strong international cooperation and a solid commitment to fully implementing the decisions of the Council. Addressing the threats and risks posed by weapons of mass destruction will also require new and creative efforts to complete unfinished business, including the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons.

I end my remarks with the words of the Secretary-General at the opening of the General Assembly general debate two days ago:

> "There is an urgent need to prevent proliferation, to promote disarmament and to preserve the gains made in these directions. Those goals are linked: progress on one will generate progress on the other." (*A/72/PV.3, p. 2*)

**Mr. President**: I thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

I now invite Mr. Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State of the United States of America, to take the floor.

**Mr. Tillerson** (United States of America): I appreciate the opportunity to address the Security Council again, and I thank this month's presidency, Ethiopia.

Members of the Security Council often talk of threats to global security. The focus of today's Security Council meeting is an issue with worldwide implications — nuclear proliferation. At a time when stabbings, crudely constructed bombs and trucks driven into crowds of innocent men, women and children are often our enemies' weapons of choice to attack us, it is easy to become complacent and see the threat of nuclear attacks as a relic of the Cold War. The threat of a nuclear attack remains a grim reality, and those who would trigger such a horrific scenario pose a unique threat to peace-loving nations.

The challenge for each of us is: How can we decrease the threat posed by nuclear weapons, not just to our own people, but people worldwide? Today I want to put four points forward.

The first is to highlight the positive trajectory of nations that have voluntarily relinquished nuclear weapons. The second is to emphasize the moral burden of possessing nuclear weapons, and the enormous responsibility that accompanies stewardship of such devastating weapons, as well as the technologies and nuclear materials that go into them. The third is to make clear that acquiring nuclear-weapons capability does not provide security, prestige or other benefits, but instead represents a path to isolation and intense security scrutiny from the global community, as those responsible nuclear Powers will check such uncertain unpredictable threats. And lastly, all nations, but most particularly the current nuclear Powers, must recommit to sound nuclear-security practices and robust and effective non-proliferation efforts in order to keep nuclear weapons and associated materials and technology out of the hands of irresponsible nations, terrorists and non-State actors.

There are historical precedents of nations abandoning their nuclear-weapons programmes and arsenals out of self-interest. Belarus, Kazakhstan, South Africa and Ukraine all weighed the risk and responsibility of nuclear weapons and made the decision to eliminate their nuclear programmes or give up their nuclear weapons. As the apartheid regime in South Africa ended, the country's leaders eliminated its nuclear weapons and joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine willingly gave up the nuclear weaponry that the Soviet collapse bequeathed to their territories, and over the years several other countries were willing to abandon clandestine nuclear-weapons development efforts when reassured by the United States and others that their relationships with us and the global community enabled them to meet their national security needs without such tools.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a particularly illustrative example of the wisdom of relinquishing nuclear weapons. In partnership with the United States and aided by the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act spearheaded by United States Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, Kazakhstan opted to remove from his territory former Soviet weapons and related nuclear technologies and joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State. This courageous decision of the leaders of Kazakhstan greatly reduced the prospect of nuclear weapons, components of nuclear weapons, nuclear materials or dual-use technologies from falling into the wrong hands. Nuclear weapons introduce complexity into relations with other countries and introduce the risk of miscalculation, accident or escalation.

Kazakhstan's actions represented a key step in that country becoming part of the community of nations. As a result of letting go of nuclear weapons, the world does not look on Kazakhstan as a potential nuclear aggressor or a rogue State. It did not make enemies of its nuclear neighbours, Russia and China. Today, Kazakhstan has overwhelmingly been at peace with his neighbours, and its trade relations are robust. This year it hosted Expo 2017, an event in Astana that showcased the sources of future energy and investment opportunities in Kazakhstan for attendees from around the world.

Kazakhstan is a modern nation making a substantial contribution to regional and international peace and prosperity. It has only benefited from its early decision. In my previous career, I met President Nazarbayev on many occasions and had the opportunity to ask him about this decision. He is more at peace with his choice than ever. He once remarked to me, "It was the best thing I ever did for our young country".

Ukraine made a similar courageous choice. Even after Russia's encouraging incursion into its territory in Crimea in eastern Ukraine, in violation of Moscow's commitments under the Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine's leaders reaffirmed yet again the wisdom of their decision to remove nuclear weapons. Their friends and allies quickly came to their aid in response to this violation of their sovereignty with a strong unified set of sanctions on Russia and are steadfastly committed to ending this conflict through full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

By rejecting the power of nuclear weapons, both of these two proud nations are in a better place than they would have been otherwise. They reduced the danger of nuclear conflict and help reduce the chances of such capabilities falling into the hands of irresponsible third parties.

As the only nation on Earth to have used nuclear weapons in warfare, the United States bears a heavy responsibility to exercise proper stewardship of nuclear weapons and to lead in working with other nations to reduce global nuclear dangers. It is a blessing and perhaps in many ways a miracle that nuclear weapons have never been used again. All the peoples of the world pray that they will never be. Experience is a hard but wise teacher and has taught everyone the grim moral responsibility that accompanies nuclear weapons.

The United States is reliant upon nuclear deterrence today for the purposes of safeguarding not only our own security interests, but also those of our allies who otherwise might feel the need to acquire such weapons themselves. Such deterrence and such relationships have contributed to the absence of war between the great Powers since 1945 and, indeed, to the fact that nuclear weapons themselves have never been used again.

We are all fortunate that John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, when they stood on the brink of a nuclear holocaust during the Cold War, came to a common understanding of the fearful and awesome power of nuclear weapons. As potential human extinction loomed over the Cuban missile crisis, the dominant emotion was fear. Nuclear weapons brought the most powerful men in the world no comfort, but it

did make clear the need to minimize the risk of ever repeating this near-miss of a catastrophe by permitting nuclear capabilities to spread further.

Just this week, the world learned of the passing of a little-known but important figure in the history of the cold war. His name was Stanislav Petrov and he is sometimes referred to as "the man who saved the world". In 1983, Petrov was a Soviet military officer on duty at a nuclear early-warning centre when his computers detected a barrage of incoming American nuclear missiles. He said, "I had all the data to suggest that it was true". He said, "If I had sent my report up the chain of command, nobody would have said a word against it". He said, "All I had to do was to reach for the phone to raise the direct line to our top commanders but I could not move. I felt like I was sitting on a frying pan".

Petrov had a hunch that the computer had made an error, and fortunately he was right about a false alarm. Instead of notifying his commanders to prepare an immediate nuclear counter-attack, he instead called army headquarters and reported a system malfunction. This episode illustrates just how high the risk factor is with nuclear weapons, especially when decisions to use them are entrusted or could be entrusted to sometimes unreliable technologies or fallible human judgment. Countries that want nuclear weapons must ask themselves, "Are we prepared to deal with this type of scenario in our own country?"

The history of the Cuban missile crisis and the Soviet early-warning malfunction illustrate how challenging it can be even for the most experienced and most sophisticated nuclear-weapon possessors to control nuclear dangers. Rogue regimes fail to appreciate the responsibilities inherent to nuclear weapons. They wish to develop or expand their holdings of nuclear weapons in what they claim to be a search for security, but in fact they desire to use such tools to intimidate and coerce their neighbours and destabilize their regions. Such acquisitions risk creating an escalating spiral of regional or global instability and conflict, not just as a direct result of their own proliferation but by prompting other nations to undertake their own nuclear-weapons programmes in response.

In such circumstances, nuclear weapons are not instruments of mutual deterrence and strategic stability, but instead are tools of destabilization. Rogue regimes may have persuaded themselves that they pursue nuclear weapons to establish and enhance their security and prestige but in fact nuclear weapons are more likely to undermine both. There is a very good reason why almost every country in the world has joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

All parties can know that they will not in the future face the threat of nuclear catastrophe from any new direction. If would-be proliferators seek security or to improve their standing in the world or to enhance the prosperity of their citizens and their peoples' hope for a brighter future, proliferation will not provide these things. There are much better proven ways for nations to establish and enhance their standing, such as deepening their trade integration with the rest of the world, adhering to international standards and agreements and participating in humanitarian activities.

The Korean peninsula serves as a stark example of these differing paths. While North Korea has shunned the international community and let its people starve while it relentlessly pursues nuclear weapons, South Korea has opted not to pursue nuclear weapons and is fully engaged with the international community. As a result, South Korea has grown into one of the world's great economic Powers, with a gross domestic product over 100 times larger that of its neighbour to the north. By contract, though, North Korea may assume that nuclear weapons will ensure the survival of its regime. In truth, nuclear weapons are clearly only leading to greater isolation, ignominy and deprivation. Continued threats against us, the United States, and now the entire global community will not create safety for the regime, but will rather stiffen our collective resolve and our commitment to deterring North Korean aggression.

North Korea is a case study in why nations must work to preserve and strengthen global non-proliferation norms. As we look to the future, the international community's record of enforcing compliance with non-proliferation obligations and commitments is not what we need it to be. It is partly for lack of such accountability that we find ourselves in the situation that we are in with North Korea at the moment. Although it joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the mid-1980s, North Korea never came into full compliance with the Treaty and cheated on every subsequent arrangement designed to remedy that non-compliance and rein in the nuclear threat it now presents.

There are also lessons here for Iran, which was on its own pathway to develop nuclear weapons, in

violation of its Non-Proliferation Treaty, nuclear safeguard obligations and multiple, legally binding Security Council resolutions. Iran seems keen to preserve for itself the option to resume such work in the future, even while sponsoring international terrorism, developing missile systems capabilities for delivering nuclear weapons and destabilizing its neighbours in a dangerous quest for regional hegemony.

The collective responsibilities of meeting such proliferation challenges will require more from all of us. As President Trump said in his speech on Tuesday,

> "If we are to embrace the opportunities of the future and overcome the present dangers together, there can be no substitute for strong, sovereign and independent nations" (*A/72/PV.3, p. 14*).

As strong, sovereign and independent nations, we must work together bilaterally, regionally and globally to stem the tide of proliferation. Sovereign States, acting in unison, will produce a global good.

We especially urge Russia to examine how it can better support global non-proliferation efforts. As the world's two most powerful nuclear States, Russia and the United States share the greatest responsibility for upholding non-proliferation norms and stopping the further spread of nuclear weapons. We have cooperated well before. The United States and the Soviet Union worked together closely in drafting most of the texts that became the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which helped keep proliferation under control through the Cold War. Washington, D.C., and Moscow did this, moreover, notwithstanding their own Cold War rivalry and the many problems in their bilateral relationship.

In the post-Cold War era, Russia worked hard to improve accountability for its nuclear stockpile dispersed across the former Soviet Union, and we engaged closely in cooperative efforts, through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, to reduce the risks of weapons or material falling into the hands of proliferators or terrorists. Unfortunately, in recent years Russia has often acted in ways that weaken global norms and undercut efforts to hold nations accountable. Examples include violating its own obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, flouting the security assurances it made at the end of the Cold War, impeding efforts to build on the legacy of past international efforts on nuclear security, and seeking to weaken the International Atomic Energy Agency's independence in investigating clandestine nuclear programmes. If Russia wants to restore its role as a credible actor in resolving the situation with North Korea, it can prove its good intentions by upholding its commitments to establishing international efforts on nuclear security and arms control.

Cooperation from China is also essential if the international community is to bring North Korean nuclear missile threats under control and prevent a catastrophe spiralling towards instability and conflict on the Korean peninsula. If China truly desires to denuclearize the Korean peninsula to promote stability and to avoid conflict in that sensitive region right on its own border, now is the time to work with the rest of us — the rest of the international community — to put the kind of pressure on North Korea that can change its strategic calculation before it is too late.

Lastly, we must be fully aware that there are non-State actors who will never conform to international norms governing nuclear weapons. Their grand-scale terror attacks, beheadings, crucifixions, burnings, rapes, torture and acts of enslavement expose the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), Al-Qaida and other groups as those who seek to find glory through death and destruction. Their eagerness to commit atrocities makes it clear that if given the chance, they would sow death and destruction on an even larger scale — and there is no scale larger than a nuclear attack on one of the world's cities. Many jihadist groups aspire to detonate a nuclear device in the heart of a booming metropolis. Their mission is to kill our people and send the world into a downward spiral. We must never allow this.

We must continue to work to secure nuclear technologies, blueprints and materials at their own sources and disrupt proliferation networks. We must deepen information-sharing between intelligence agencies in order to identify actors and identify where nuclear materials have been or may be diverted from legitimate uses. We must revive the practice of creating alternative career and job opportunities for nuclear experts so they do not sell their skills on the black market.

But ultimately, the best means to halt jihadists in their quest for nuclear weapons is to destroy them long before they can reach their goal. Whether on the battlefield, in the streets or online, terrorism must be given no quarter. We must remain ever vigilant against the spread of ISIS and other Islamist groups

in new locations, whether in Africa, Asia, Europe or elsewhere. One of the great successes of the campaign of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria has been uprooting ISIS from formally safe havens in which it could freely mastermind attacks against targets the world over. These efforts must continue.

As a body committed to security, we must treat nuclear proliferation with the seriousness it deserves. For those of us on the Security Council, counteracting nuclear threats begins with full enforcement of the Security Council resolutions all Member States are bound to implement. To make sure all nations are able to play their part, we must continue to work for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). But signing treaties and adopting resolutions is not enough. Stopping nuclear proliferation also entails exercising other levers of power, whether diplomatic, economic, digital, moral or, if necessary, military. Ultimately, we each have a sovereign responsibility to ensure that we keep the world safe from nuclear warfare, the aftermath of which would transcend all borders.

The United States will continue to work to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We ask all peace-loving nations to join us in this mission.

**The President**: I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan to take the floor.

**Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan): I thank the Ethiopian presidency for providing this platform. I also thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Nakamitsu and the previous speaker, Secretary Tillerson, for their very valuable reflections, including on the contribution of my nation to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The effective implementation of resolutions, treaties and conventions, together with sanctions regimes, are mutually complementary instruments that prohibit the use and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The effectiveness of sanctions resolutions is measured by their ability to achieve the mandated goals. We regret to note that the impact of sanctions resolutions does not always meet our expectations. This is often because of the deliberate non-compliance of other States that undermine our collective efforts to maintain peace and stability.

Kazakhstan's approach to this issue has been conceived by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has repeatedly underscored the need to develop concrete mechanisms to discourage nuclear-weapon-possessing States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) from withdrawing from the Treaty. More specifically, it was proposed by my President that a State's request for withdrawal should be subject to intensive inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for possible violations, as a review of the reasons for withdrawal by NPT member States at an extraordinary conference, and, if all attempts fail, an immediate transfer of the matter to the Security Council under Chapter VII, Article 41, of the Charter of the United Nations.

We recommend that a similar process be applied to States that regularly violate WMD-related resolutions. Certain fundamental questions need to be considered, including the rationale for their actions and how Member States can be motivated to not cooperate with States under sanctions. We must try to foresee which of the imposed sanctions are detrimental to the trade and economic interests of other States and whether it would be worthwhile considering the development of compensatory and incentive-based mechanisms to ensure that Member States fully adhere to their obligations, or restrict or terminate cooperation with States under sanctions.

Today, with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the dilemma arises when the Council is aware that a military solution is not an option, but at the same time it is not easy to launch a negotiating process. Kazakhstan strongly condemns Pyongyang's defiant, provocative actions. We consider the continued sanctions pressure is a step in the right direction until North Korea heeds the appeal of the world's majority.

We therefore suggest that the parties involved should reduce tensions and weigh the prospects of all possible decisions. We believe that the joint proposals of Russia and China are worthy of consideration. The role of Secretary-General Guterres as a mediator cannot be underestimated. Therefore, developing and adopting a universal document within the United Nations on negative guarantees and non-aggression by the five permanent members of the Security Council and other nuclear Powers would be most relevant and a significant incentive for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the NPT as a non-nuclear State.

Implementing the robust steps undertaken by President Nursultan Nazarbayev — namely, in closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and renouncing

the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal — strongly required the cooperative efforts of the Russian Federation and the United States. Their cooperation in assisting my nation to rid its nuclear legacy, as well as the rehabilitation of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, was exemplary. I believe that the United States and the Russian Federation could continue with this very fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation in new circumstances with regard to the new threats emerging in our contemporary world.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the Security Council's resolution, Kazakhstan is ready to offer practical assistance by hosting a regional seminar for Central Asian countries. This would be in conjunction with the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). We also highly appreciate the open briefing to be held on 9 October by the Chair of the 1718 Committee for all Member States.

With regard to Iran, we would like to note that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) on the Iranian nuclear programme was achieved as a result of intense prolonged negotiations, and we were honoured to host two rounds of those talks in our southern capital, Almaty. It is necessary to acknowledge that this agreement has put Iran on a nuclear-free path, with the IAEA confirming that Iran is fulfilling all its nuclear obligations. We should therefore convincingly show Pyongyang the correct road map, with a legal solution that also works pragmatically. It is worth pointing out that it was due to the active efforts of the parties, through their determined peace talks, that the JCPoA was achieved against the backdrop of continuing sanctions.

Another glaring illustration of a weakened non-proliferation regime is the case of the use WMD in Syria. In general, Kazakhstan is firmly convinced that the Security Council must be united at this critical stage in its approach to finding a political solution to the crisis in Syria. For our part, we will continue to provide the Astana platform a complement in order to facilitate the negotiation processes in Geneva. In turn, an early resolution of the military and political crisis in Syria would allow us to remove the vacuum that allows chemical weapons be used with impunity.

The non-proliferation regime is greatly supported by the cooperation mechanisms of resolution 1540 (2004), and every effort must be made to strengthen its implementation. My country participates actively in its work and continues to provide financial assistance. In this context, we acknowledge that the Nuclear Security Summits, initiated by the United States and followed by others, have significantly reduced the nuclear threat and strengthened the global architecture of nuclear safety.

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed, during the launch of the IAEA low-enriched uranium bank facility in Kazakhstan, reviving the process of Nuclear Security Summits and offered Astana as a host for such a summit in the future. He has also proposed to unite the efforts of all the States from nuclear weapon-free zones, which have proven to be one of the most effective means in the fight against the spread of nuclear weapons.

All of us need to show responsibility, political will and wisdom to take decisions of great historical significance. We need to put the good of humankind above national interests to solve one of the most difficult global problems — keeping the world safe from WMDs. I am confident that we will do so.

**The President**: I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt to take the floor.

**Mr. Selim** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, at the outset, I should like to express my sincere joy at seeing you preside over the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her valuable briefing. We can conclude from that briefing that a new and comprehensive approach is needed to guarantee the adoption of effective measures in an attempt to put an end to the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

We must also stress the centrality of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in maintaining international peace and security. In light of the vital importance that Egypt attaches to the disarmament and non-proliferation of WMDs, and to seize this important opportunity to discuss such a crucial issue in such an important setting, I have decided, contrary to normal practice, to deliver my statement today in English to ensure the full clarity of my message.

(*spoke in English*)

Egypt has always been at the forefront of multilateral efforts aimed at the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which continue to represent one of the most pressing threats to humankind and to international peace and security. We highly value the indispensable role of the Security Council

in addressing proliferation challenges and enforcing the relevant Security Council resolutions and legal framework governing the issue. However, we believe that the Council's working methods in this area require significant improvement. We should examine more efficient and inclusive methods that would improve the sense of ownership of the measures adopted, seek a stronger utilization of the Secretary-General's good offices, and always adopt decisions that reinforce the concept that the ultimate aim of all measures adopted by the Council is to achieve a peaceful political solution.

From a more comprehensive perspective, Egypt reiterates its concern over the grave threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, and we reaffirm that the total, verifiable and irreversible elimination of such weapons represents the ultimate guarantee against their proliferation and the ultimate warranty against their use by States or non-State actors. Attaining this goal largely depends on the implementation by the nuclear weapon States of their obligations under article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and leading the efforts towards the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty, which continues to represent the cornerstone of international security and the core of today's disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

In spite of the evident tangible progress achieved in the area of non-proliferation, progress towards nuclear disarmament continues to be held hostage to construed conceptions pertaining to strategic stability. It is time for us, States Members of the United Nations, to have an honest and inclusive discussion on the validity and consistency of those arguments that imply that the possession of nuclear weapons and reliance on nuclear deterrence contribute to international security and stability. In fact, a closer look at contemporary non-proliferation challenges, including country-specific cases, would clearly reveal that, one way or another, those challenges flow from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the discriminatory nature of the non-proliferation regime, which undermines its credibility and effectiveness.

There is no doubt that, in a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations and the Security Council would have been much better positioned to address non-proliferation threats and cases of non-compliance in a more credible and non-discriminatory manner. Practice has shown that it is quite illusive to address non-proliferation while disregarding disarmament, or selectively tackle cases of non-compliance while deliberately ignoring achieving the universality of the NPT.

Several recent remarkable developments, such as the adoption of the Humanitarian Pledge, as well as a landmark treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, are clear signs that the circumstances have changed on the international stage — clear messages that the non-nuclear-weapon States that have truly committed themselves to the principles of disarmament and non-proliferation are becoming increasingly impatient with regard to the need to seriously address the gaps in the prevailing regime and the discrimination embedded therein, which was not intended to last forever at the time of the NPT negotiations or at its entry into force.

Despite the extremely volatile nature of its region, Egypt has proven its good intentions by becoming party to the NPT and fully implementing its obligations, in recognition of the vital role of the Treaty in international security. We took those decisions in good faith because we value human life and international security. Furthermore, Egypt has always actively supported and implemented all Security Council resolutions aimed at addressing country-specific proliferation concerns without discrimination, as well as combating the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

Egypt continues to fully support the Council's role in seeking a peaceful solution to address the nuclear activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which violate Security Council resolutions and which we strongly condemn. We also support the Council's supervision of Iran's compliance with its obligations, as well as establishing credible facts regarding the parties responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Nevertheless, the Middle East regrettably continues to be one of the most evident examples of the threats that the non-proliferation regime is facing, as well as the selective manner in which the Security Council has approached such threats. It is important to recall that the Security Council has failed to implement the stipulations of resolution 687 (1991), which contains an explicit recognition of the objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

It is therefore unsurprising that the region is experiencing an unprecedented level of frustration, especially among the Arab countries, due to the repeated failures in implementing the agreed undertaking to

establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This is reflected in the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, which represents an integral part of the decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty. We remain greatly disappointed by the decision of three States parties to the NPT to block consensus on the final document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, thereby further eroding the credibility of the Treaty.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our principled position that such thematic, cross-cutting issues pertaining to the enforcement of disarmament and non-proliferation commitments should also be addressed in a more inclusive manner and with the active involvement of all Member States in all the relevant organs of the United Nations. Collective security for all is a necessary requirement now more than ever to achieve the kind of sustainable peace and development that we owe to future generations.

**The President**: I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to take the floor.

**Mr. Klimkin** (Ukraine): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on this highly important issue at the request of the United States delegation. I also appreciate the substantive briefing by Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu.

For years the international community has been working persistently to establish a rules-based international order "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" — a phrase we all know too well. A whole range of international instruments were elaborated to that end, especially in the area of non-proliferation. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has become a key fundamental element of the system of collective security. Was it a major achievement? Definitely, yes. As of today, 191 States have adhered to the Treaty. Is it an ultimate success? Here I am not so sure. Almost 50 years after its entry into force, the possible use of nuclear weapons remains a threat. Furthermore, some States still aspirte to develope their own nuclear-weapon capabilities. In addition, the Chemical Weapons Convention has been blatantly trampled — in Syria — for the first time in many years. I cannot fail to mention the growing risk of the most dangerous materials falling into the hands of non-State actors, whether intentionally or as a result of neglect or oversight.

The mere fact that today we must again discuss how to enforce Security Council resolutions aimed at preventing the spread of weapons of mass destructions clearly proves that the existing system of established norms and principles has been eroded. This is not just about proliferation, but is an indication of the broader problem of insufficient implementation of international law and of systematic violations thereof. The current state of affairs can suit only those who seek to undermine the very foundations of the international order. A lack of real accountability for defying international norms only encourages further breaches.

North Korea is probably the most appalling case. Despite numerous decisions by this organ, the regime continues its nuclear and missile programme, keeping the entire region and its own people hostage. It seems that North Korea's leaders are prepared to sacrifice their own people, starving them to death, just to satisfy their rampant ambitions. Unfortunately, we know how it feels from our own history when Soviet rulers created famine in Ukraine, selling grain for gold, using slave labour in camps to build up military capacity, and testing nuclear weapons on their own troops just to see how they worked. The nuclear ambitions of North Korea and its recent actions in defiance of Security Council decisions is an open challenge to the entire international community.

In the Middle East, the use of chemical weapons — something that was considered unthinkable less than a decade ago — now represents a very clear danger. The task is therefore to reverse this precarious trend and prevent the world from sliding into a state of lawlessness. We must stand united to achieve a universal adherence to rules that we ourselves created.

How do we ensure the implementation of Council resolutions to prevent the spread of the most dangerous and destructive weapons? Indeed, the unconditional and faithful implementation of the relevant resolutions is a key prerequisite to reduce the level of threat and to prevent any kind of new provocation. Yet the Council is not always united and staunch in taking necessary measures for an effective, rather than formal, response. Breaches of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as the use of other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons, should be treated by the international community as a clear danger. That is why I urge Council members to put aside differences and use every tool available to ensure full compliance with the relevant decisions.

In the absence of the political will to do so, the situation can spiral out of control. There should be unavoidable accountability for each and every violation. The risks in this area arise not only from gaps in national legislation, but also from the rapid developments in science and technology, as well as e-commerce, along with the lack of awareness among academia, industry and civil society. Strengthening cooperation in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is therefore fundamental and absolutely essential.

No part of the globe is immune to the risk of proliferation. In the 1990s, Ukraine voluntarily dismantled the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal. I remember that time quite well, as my father was flying Soviet nuclear bombers and I started my diplomatic career on nuclear disarmament. We Ukrainians did that being convinced of the supremacy of fundamental international principles, such as the inviolability of international borders, territorial integrity and sovereignty. We believed that those principles were sacred to everyone. Two decades later we still hold those principles dear. Yet we came to realize, unfortunately all too well, that they are not sacred to everyone. I want to stress, in that regard, that violations of international law, including in the sphere of non-proliferation, constitute the single most significant threat to international peace and security.

As members of the Council know, Ukraine is confronting aggression by a nuclear-weapon State, Russia. Brutal violations of international obligations, including under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, by Russia, which acceded to assurances of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, undermine the whole United Nations security system, based on the principles of international law. One could also recall, in that regard, the obligation of the nuclear-weapons States set out in the final document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons:

> "to fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances".

More than three years ago, Russia not only carried an act of military aggression against Ukraine but, by violating the Budapest Memorandum, it also demonstrated that the solemn promise of a nuclear Power to respect the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine and to ensure that none of their weapons ever be used against Ukraine, except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, is now worth nothing.

The Russian narrative that it did not breach the Budapest Memorandum since nuclear weapons were not used against my country is yet another cynical manipulation. Just think of the impression it made in the eyes of States seeking to bolster their deterrent potential. Just think of the impact to the global non-proliferation infrastructure.

The recent drill on launching a massive nuclear-missile strike, which was conducted during the Zapad 2017 exercise, does not inspire any confidence in Russia. It can hardly be considered as contributing to strengthening international security in general, or the non-proliferation regime in particular. That is why we are convinced that the issue of providing non-nuclear-weapon States with effective negative security guarantees is not a platitude. The global non-proliferation regime will benefit immensely from enforceable security guarantees. Let us all be absolutely frank on this issue: empty proclamations do not convince anyone anymore.

The international community has a collective responsibility to restore respect for international law and find lasting solutions to the most urgent threats to global peace and security. It is therefore ultimately the responsibility of the Security Council to spare no effort to achieve the overarching goal and prove that the non-proliferation system works effectively. Otherwise, the world map will be redrawn by newly emerged nuclear-weapon actors. It is the Council that has to remain determined and precise in preventing such a scenario from becoming tomorrow's reality.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

**Ms. Wallström** (Sweden): I thank you, Mr. President, and the United States for arranging this timely and important meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for the introduction to the subject.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is definitely a growing threat to international peace and security. Having looked around the table — before I begin my formal statement — I would like to say that I cannot help but reflect on the composition of the

Security Council. We have Ukraine and Kazakhstan, which have scrapped nuclear weapons; we have Bolivia and Uruguay, from a continent free from such weapons; we have the five countries that possess such weapons; and Japan, the only country that has experienced their destructive force and power. It therefore seems to me that this ought to be the perfect group of countries to move forward on this particular issue.

For close to half a century, Sweden has been a champion of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As so clearly articulated by the Secretary-General in his opening address to the General Assembly on Tuesday (see A/72/PV.3), those goals are intrinsically linked. We have a moral and humanitarian responsibility to make progress on both. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons initiative is an expression of the widespread and well-founded frustration that exists with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. That will remain so until we see real progress with nuclear-weapon States delivering on their commitments.

Sweden is committed to the success of the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the call in successive Security Council resolutions to all States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions. In addition to providing analytical and forensic expertise, Sweden has contributed financially in support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the regime established by resolution 1540 (2004). Through the European Union, we have contributed significantly to outreach programmes designed to help countries strengthen their export control systems.

Regrettably, since we joined the Council in January, we have been called upon, time and again, to address the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, and we have condemned those provocations in the strongest terms. Likewise, we have been dealing with numerous cases where horrific chemical weapons have been used by the Syrian regime and by Da'esh. The Council's efforts to stop the spread of these deadly weapons need the full support of all Member States to succeed. For that reason, Sweden has called for the universal and comprehensive implementation of existing sanctions regimes. This applies not least to the non-proliferation-related sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We must all work together to implement those sanctions fully, so as not to contribute to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's illegal nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles programmes. Improved monitoring and targeted capacity-building are important measures. I join the Secretary-General in his call for unity in the Council and diplomatic engagement to resolve the crisis.

Atrocities such as those perpetrated in the Idlib province in April are unacceptable, and those responsible must be brought to justice. Sweden applauds the way in which the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Joint Investigative Mechanism have fulfilled their mandate by investigating cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria and identifying those responsible, with a high level of expertise and professionalism. We must continue to give our full and unambiguous support to these important mechanisms. The Council must stand united to ensure the accountability of perpetrators.

It would be remiss of me not to mention, in that context, resolution 2231 (2016) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action JCPOA. As stated by Federica Mogherini last April,

> "the JCPOA was a historic achievement for the security of the region and of the whole world, a success for multilateral diplomacy that has proven to work and deliver".

It is absolutely vital that all parties continue to implement their JCPOA commitments meticulously and unfailingly. Strict and effective verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Joint Commission for addressing implementation matters are vital components of the agreement.

Implementing the resolutions is just one side of the coin. We must also nurture and defend the existing multilateral instruments that we have established to curtail the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Unity is key. That applies to the Joint Investigative Mechanism, but also other important non-proliferation tools, such as the resolution 1540 (2004) regime and the IAEA-strengthened safeguards system, to mention just two.

The spread of weapons of mass destruction is one of the gravest challenges to international

peace and security, and a crucial responsibility of the Council. Sweden will continue to do its part to promote disarmament and non-proliferation, respect for international law and accountability for those who violate their international legal obligations.

**The President**: I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to take the floor.

**Mr. Kono** (Japan): Please allow me to begin by emphasizing how timely it is for the Security Council members to have this opportunity during the high-level week of the General Assembly to discuss non-proliferation, an issue that the international community must tackle in unison.

Japan is deeply concerned by the serious challenges facing the international non-proliferation regime. It is critical for the Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to resolutely and concretely address the serious issues that are shaking the very foundation of the non-proliferation regime.

Given the seriousness of the situation, it is urgent that we achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty without further delay, in addition to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime. Japan calls upon the international community to work closely on practical and concrete measures to that end.

North Korea has ignored the strong protests and warnings of the international community by going ahead with a ballistic missile launch that flew over Japan last week. Earlier this month, it also conducted its sixth nuclear test, which is suspected of being a hydrogen-bomb test and which was on a far greater scale than previous tests. This is an entirely unacceptable provocation. North Korea's provocative actions, including its nuclear test and the series of ballistic missile launches, pose grave challenges to the international non-proliferation regime. It goes without saying that North Korea's actions clearly violate relevant Security Council resolutions. They also pose an unprecedented, grave and imminent threat to the peace and security of the region, including Japan.

No bright future awaits North Korea if it continues on its present path and its isolation from the world continues. Japan strongly urges North Korea to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted resolution 2375 (2017), and to immediately demonstrate seriousness and concrete actions towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Japan also calls for North Korea to return to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement as soon as possible.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula requires the international community to apply the strongest possible pressure on North Korea. Current efforts are insufficient, and further pressure is needed. To that end, Japan strongly calls for all States Members of the United Nations to fully and promptly implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. No State should be allowed to use a loophole in the North Korea sanctions regime.

The non-proliferation of chemical weapons is another important issue that needs to be addressed by the international community. Japan, which experienced a sarin chemical attack in its subway, cannot accept the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. In that regard, Japan condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons in the town of Khan Shaykhun in Syria. The Organzation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism are currently conducting their investigation to identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks. Japan supports the activities of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. I would like to stress that the Security Council must be united and hold the perpetrators accountable in order to prevent a recurrence of the use of chemical weapons.

Finally, I would like to address the issues surrounding Iran. Japan supports the Iran nuclear deal, which will contribute to the international non-proliferation regime and the stability of the Middle East. It is extremely important that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) be continuously and steadily implemented. In that regard, Japan supports the monitoring and verification activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency and again underlines the importance of the steady implementation of the JCPOA and its spirit. The ballistic missile launches by Iran are inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015). Japan strongly calls for Iran to play a constructive role in the region.

I would like to conclude by calling for the international community to make concerted efforts

against actions that threaten the international non-proliferation regime.

**The President**: I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy to take the floor.

**Mr. Alfano** (Italy): I want to thank the United States for calling for today's meeting.

Almost 50 years ago, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons entered into force. Thanks to collective efforts, the Non-Proliferation Treaty has become a pillar of our collective security. Over the course of the Treaty's existence, Italy has been a champion of the Treaty. Non-proliferation is a fundamental good that the international community and the Security Council have to preserve. Collective security cannot be guaranteed without non-proliferation. It is important to have robust and effective implementation of international law. There should be accountability.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has caused one of the biggest crises of our times. We have to stand firm and united in order to defend non-proliferation, which is a common good for all of us and a guarantee of peace, security, and stability. Italy condemned Pyongyang's launching of a ballistic missile over Japan on 15 September, as well as all of North Korea's missile and nuclear tests. With resolution 2375 (2017), the Council sent a clear and strong message: further attempts by the regime to defy the United Nations will backfire. If North Korea wants to step back from self-isolation, it must stop developing its missile and nuclear programme.

A different story is that of Iran, which has moved in a positive direction regarding its own nuclear programme. The Iran nuclear deal has delivered gains for global security by imposing strict limits on Tehran's nuclear programme. In return, we have lifted sanctions. It serves as a good example of effective diplomacy and smart sanctions. However, reaching the deal was just the beginning. Now we must continue to ensure that Iran does not stray off the path of nuclear non-proliferation.

As the facilitator of resolution 2231 (2015), Italy will continue to foster the smooth implementation of that crucial resolution. We are concerned by Iran's missile tests, which seem inconsistent with the spirit, if not the letter, of resolution 2231 (2015). That can exacerbate regional instability and put the progress made so far at risk.

Unfortunately, we have seen no progress in Syria. To the contrary, we have witnessed the repeated use of chemical weapons against innocent people. That constitutes a horrific war crime. Their use by the regime and by Daesh must be stopped. Those found guilty of such war crimes have to be sanctioned accordingly. Therefore, we need to redouble our efforts to identify anyone who has played a role in the use of chemical weapons against the defenceless civilian population.

I have a few more words on the use of sanctions. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), on North Korea, Italy has focused on the concrete effectiveness of sanctions. It is important to monitor their implementation in order to get a precise picture of compliance by the sanctioned party and address weaknesses in the enforcement of sanctions. We have also placed emphasis on strengthening technical assistance and capacity-building, providing Member States with the necessary tools to implement the sanctions.

Moreover, we have worked to increase political awareness of the sanctions framework. In order to achieve that goal, the Committee has intensified its outreach activities and has facilitated regular exchanges of information among Member States, the Committee and the Panel of Experts. So far, six outreach meetings have taken place for each United Nations regional group. We have already scheduled an open briefing for the entire United Nations membership on 9 October. Thanks to that outreach, an increasing number of States are now reporting to the Committee on the implementation of the sanctions. We are seeing the results of our joint work.

At the same time, Italy is engaged with our partners from the European Union to adopt resolution 2375 (2017), on North Korea, into our legal system as soon as possible and identify more autonomous, restrictive measures.

To conclude, we want to ensure that the sanctions have an impact on the proliferation programmes of the regime. However, we also want to avoid negatively affecting the humanitarian situation because, as an international community, we care about the fate of the people of North Korea.

**The President**: I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China to take the floor.

**Mr. Wang Yi** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and their means of delivery constitutes a real threat to international peace and threat, as well as a shared challenge for the international community. Therefore, I deem it extremely necessary and timely for the Security Council to devote today's meeting to that subject so as to discuss how to address the proliferation challenges, mobilize international consensus, enhance capacity-building and strengthen coordination and cooperation.

Thanks to the unremitting efforts of the international community, the non-proliferation regime has become increasingly refined and sophisticated. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear issue serves as a useful lesson for the diplomatic settlement of key non-proliferation issues. With the continued and steady implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), international efforts have been strengthened in order to deal with challenges posed by non-State actors.

Meanwhile, we have to recognize that the current international security situation is undergoing profound changes. Non-proliferation still faces challenges and risks. A few individual countries defying the consensus of the international community have conducted several nuclear tests. The risk of non-State actors, especially terrorists, acquiring and using WMDs is on the rise. The international non-proliferation regime must urgently increase its authority, universality and effectiveness.

Non-proliferation is a matter of international peace and security and makes up an important part of communally building a shared future for humankind. It requires coordinated, good-faith international cooperation on many fronts.

First, it is necessary to address both symptoms and root causes. Non-proliferation is basically a matter of security. Security concerns may be the biggest motivation behind proliferation. Countries must pursue common cooperative, comprehensive and sustainable security and pursue a new type of international relations that feature win-win cooperation. Countries must renounce the notion of their own absolute security and opt for universal security for all. That is the effective way to fundamentally resolve proliferation issues.

Secondly, we need to adhere to the orientation of diplomatic settlement. It is necessary to impose sanctions and pressure as appropriate on countries that blatantly violate international non-proliferation rules, but Sanctions are not a panacea — dialogue and negotiation present a fundamental solution. Confrontation and sanctions alone only lead to the escalation and spilloverof conflicts. We need to discard the willful use of long-arm jurisdiction, as it is in the interests of nobody.

Thirdly, we must uphold the international non-proliferation regime. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is customary international law in the field of non-proliferation. The international non-proliferation regime, with the NPT as its bedrock, is an essential element of the international security order established after the Second World War. It has prevented more countries from accessing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) while protecting global strategic balance and stability. The practice of using international law when it is suitable, but putting it aside when it is not, should be discarded. Double standards or a selective approach should also be discarded; otherwise, the dyke of the international non-proliferation regime could collapse a result of one small leak.

Fourthly, we need to strengthen the non-proliferation capacity of various countries. The primary responsibility rests with Governments. We must respect and support countries in formulating their non-proliferation policies, according to national circumstances, and help countries bolster their laws and regulations on non-proliferation, strengthen law enforcement capacities and carry out exchanges, mutual learning and cooperation in the field of non-proliferation, so as to jointly enhance non-proliferation performance and capacity.

China firmly opposes the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. We have set up a complete non-proliferation and export control system and have ensured its effective implementation. At the same time, China is also actively participating in international non-proliferation processes, while comprehensively and completely implementing relevant Security Council resolutions, and has been dedicated to the political settlement of hotspot non-proliferation issues.

China has played a contrustive part in negotiations on the JCPOA and contributed its own proposals. China has made tireless efforts for a negotiated settlement to the Korean nuclear issue. We have raised a suspension-for-

suspension initiative and a dual-track approach, which are feasible and practical solutions to the issue. China believes that Security Council resolutions on the Korean nuclear issue should be implemented in their entirety entirety and in an effective way, while intensifying sanctions. It is also important to promote the resumption of talks and dialogue. Sanctions pressure needs to be translated into the motivation for negotiations. China also supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and United Nations agencies in reaching comprehensive objectives and carrying out comprehensive, objective and fair investigations into the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

International non-proliferation efforts require the participation of various countries, and vice versa. China is ready to work with all parties to make a greater contribution to maintaining and strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation on global governance in the field of non-proliferation and building a community of shared future for humankind.

**Mr. Lemoyne** (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I thank the Ethiopian presidency, the United States and its Secretary of State, Mr. Rex Tillerson, for convening this very timely and necessary meeting. I also thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her very informative speech.

The General Assembly's high-level week will be marked by intense discussions on the acute threats to our world. Our strategic environment and the foundations of peace and security, as we know them, are facing major challenges, particularly in the area of non-proliferation. There is no doubt that the outlook is bleak. With the barbaric use of toxic agents in Syria, Iraq and Asia, we are witnessing the disastrous reappearance of weapons that sow the seeds of fear and death among people — ones that we thought we had banished to the annals of history.

I also refer to the growing risks on the Korean peninsula, which will have monopolized many of our discussions this week. The threat has now risen to an increasingly alarming and unprecedented level and is of concern to us all. Far from reverting to reason, the Pyongyang regime is continuing its military escalation and continues to provide evidence of its irresponsible attitude through its increasingly disturbing and threatening actions.

Beyond those worrying cases, we are facing increasingly complex proliferation flows and increased risks of diversion of sensitive goods and technologies, which are more and more easily accessible. Finally, proliferation is no longer the exclusive domain of a single type of actor — the risk of non-State actors getting their hands on sensitive materials is now a dangerous reality. In the face of those extremely serious challenges, only pragmatic and realistic multilateralism can be the solution.

The Iranian case confirms that a proactive attitude from the international community can open up solutions to proliferation crises. The Vienna agreement, which France has actively helped to build and improve, is a major historic milestone. President Macron has said that France is firmly committed to it. It would be a mistake to denounce the agreement, as it would be irresponsible to pursue an à la carte implementation of the provisions of the resolution that endorsed it. We must respond to the intensification of Iran's ballistic activities, some of which are not in conformity with resolution 2231 (2015). Such behaviour is destabilizing for regional security and undermines mutual trust.

To put it another way, there can be no alternative to the non-proliferation regime. That is a constant line from which France has never deviated. That is particularly true of the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, where those responsible for the tragedy on 4 April and so many other attacks will have to be held accountable.

That also applies to the ongoing crisis on the Korean peninsula, which we must respond to with firmness and unity. The only way out of the crisis is to chart the way for a negotiated solution. While North Korea refuses that option and chooses dangerous isolation, only firmness can give us the leverage we seek to bring the regime to the negotiating table.

Collective action to contain proliferation requires dialogue and a direct discussion of crises. However, it also involves concrete and operation action. To contain and curb proliferation, we must, more than ever, increase our mobilization. However, let us not neglect the virtue of the regimes already in place — the current non-proliferation regime is being severely tested but it has also proved its worth.

The Security Council has long been committed to strengthening the current non-proliferation regime. It can count on the support of the international organizations that are capable of verifying the compliance of States

with their commitments and establishing facts and responsibilities. I would like to commend the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In addition, multilateralism, as part of non-proliferation, strengthens cooperation and the exchange of information. Mechanisms, such as export control regimes and the Proliferation Security Initiative, are part of a virtuous movement that enhances our level of vigilance. We must work to strengthen those mechanisms.

To conclude, I wish to recall one simple truth. What is at stake is the weakening of the non-proliferation regime. If that were to happen, the very existence and authority of the rule of law would be threatened. We would need to further sanction violations. Beyond our passing political differences, as deep as they might seem, there are fundamental rules from which we cannot waver. Non-proliferation is at the forefront of those, because it is a important concern to us all. France's message is simple — the fight against proliferation is a collective responsibility. Everyone must contribute to shouldering that responsibility as much as they can. There is no room for impotence, fatalism or political exploitation. We can and must do more. Our responsibility today, our credibility in the future and our ability to protect generations to come from the risk of an eroded or even collapsed non-proliferation architecture are at stake. I assure the Council that France is fully committed to that endeavour.

**Mr. Field** (United Kingdom): I thank Secretary Tillerson for calling this important meeting of the Security Council.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the gravest regional and international security concerns. This threat does not respect national borders, and the proliferation of such weapons must end. We all have a part to play in this.Our shared rules and norms are designed to keep the world safe. The Council has a responsibility to prevent proliferation, tackle threats and respond when these weapons are used. Individual nations also have a responsibility to implement the measures imposed by the Council and indeed to be ready to go further when the situation requires.

Individually and collectively we must enforce these rules, working through bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), or as groups of concerned States. If we are to succeed, the Council and strong multilateral institutions must be at the heart of that approach and we must persist when countries continue to defy the international rules-based system. That is why it is right that we have collectively developed a framework of sanctions against North Korea and continued to strengthen those sanctions in the face of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's dangerous provocations. I was in Seoul only last month and was struck by the focus of President Moon Jae-in's Government in trying to resolve the situation, recognizing that what has long been a regionalized dispute now has truly global ramifications.

Secretary Tillerson has made it clear that the United States does not regard it as desirable to work for regime change or accelerated reunification of the peninsula, to garrison its forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel or indeed to harm the North Korean people. Yet the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has responded with more missile tests and another nuclear test. While the regime prioritizes its military programmes, the people of North Korea suffer deprivation and hardship. That is why we must all continue to press North Korea to respect the Council's resolutions and, even at this late stage, to change its reckless course. We must enforce the measures that we have adopted and be prepared to expand them if North Korea continues on that reckless path.

Turning to the very different case of Iran, we now know that the multilateral system can and will continue to deliver results. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has succeeded in limiting Iran's nuclear capability. Iran has rolled back its nuclear programme, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has had unprecedented access. The British Government will therefore continue to abide by its commitments under that deal and urge the other parties to do the same. Iran must also continue to do so if we are all to have confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. However, while the JCPOA has dealt with one risk, others, as we all know, remain. Iran continues to play a destabilizing role within its region and its ballistic-missile testing is still inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015). Iran must respect the call of the Council and cease such activities.

As other members have said, the situation in Syria also poses the most serious proliferation challenges. This year, sarin gas has again been used as weapon, in a clear violation of the international prohibition

of the use of chemical weapons. There must be no impunity for the perpetrators of such terrible crimes against humanity. The United Kingdom Government urges Council members to support the vital work of the Council-mandated OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and to renew its mandate, and we must keep up the efforts to prevent non-State actors from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction, based on resolution 1540 (2004).

We all recognize that these proliferation challenges are very complex. They require a persistent and united approach in line with existing treaties and norms. That is why the Government of the United Kingdom, for one, does not believe that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was opened for signature yesterday, is helpful. I believe that it will only create unnecessary divisions and undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which rightly sits at the heart of all of our non-proliferation efforts.

The Security Council has a heavy responsibility to protect international peace and security. Member States share that responsibility and must play their part in implementing the Council's resolutions. We now need to work tirelessly together to stop proliferation, save lives and make the world a safer place.

**Mr. Loedel** (Uruguay) (*spoke internationaln Spanish*): I would like to thank the delegation of the United States for convening this meeting and for the concept note that has been circulated. I am also grateful to Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her statement.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a serious and real threat to international peace and security. When we discuss the proliferation of such weapons in the Security Council, we must remember that all States have a duty to respect their obligations under international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

In 1968, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was hailed as the most significant international agreement on disarmament ever achieved. Under the Treaty, non-nuclear-weapon States committed to refraining from acquiring, developing or producing such arms and to verification by the international community, and recognized the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Nuclear-weapon States committed to getting rid of them. The NPT, which became the cornerstone of the disarmament and nuclear-non-proliferation regime, requires a balanced implementation of its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is the only Treaty currently in force with regard to such weapons. Thirty years after the NPT's entry into force, two of the three countries that were not signatories to it detonated nuclear bombs and joined the category of nuclear-weapon States. Much more recently, a third State, which withdrew from the Treaty, has also entered that category, and we cannot ignore that.

With the fiftieth anniversary of the NPT one year away, it is clear that the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament is a long way off. Disarmament today is either at a standstill or, worse, sliding backwards. To quote article VI of the NPT,

> "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

The commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States is far from having been fully upheld. A clear example of this is the absence of those States from the negotiation process on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which opened for signature yesterday. Our country is proud to be a signatory thereto.

The use and threat of use of nuclear weapons represent a crime against humanity and a grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of the Charter of the United Nations. The only guarantee against the use and threat of use of these weapons is their express prohibition and their total elimination.

At a time when tension on the Korean peninsula continues to escalate and when the threat of the use of nuclear weapons and of a military conflict is keeping everyone on high alert, it is necessary to remain calm and ensure that we protect global peace and security. Nuclear weapons must never again be used by any actor, under any circumstances. There is no military solution to the North Korean problem. The solution must be a political one.

The Security Council must remain united on this issue and uphold its commitment to a peaceful and

diplomatic solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula. Any other option would be an immense failure for the Council and the Organization.

Uruguay sees no other solution to the North Korean issue than one that is found through dialogue, negotiation and political commitment between parties.

Regarding chemical weapons, Uruguay condemns the use of toxic chemicals as weapons against civilians in any armed conflict. Such actions constitute war crimes, and those responsible must be held accountable and brought to justice. In this connection, Uruguay supports the work undertaken by the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and we commend the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to clarify who was responsible for the incidents in Syria. The JIM has identified the terrorist group the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham-Da'esh and the Government of Syria as responsible for some of the chemical attacks in Syria.

Uruguay also wishes to underscore the importance of halting the proliferation of conventional weapons to areas of conflict. The trafficking and trading of arms among the parties to armed conflict directly contributes to the suffering and death of civilians. As was the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay stated in May in the Council, quoting the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the five permanent members of the Security Council supplied 75 per cent of the volume of the total arms exports for the 2011-2015 period (see S/PV.7951).

As a country resolutely committed to bolstering the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Uruguay from this rostrum issues a strong appeal to all States to urgently comply with all disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, in line with the international legal framework. In particular, we appeal to those States that produce, possess and sell arms. Disarmament and non-proliferation must be a priority for all without exception.

**Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by conveying to you the sincere apologies of his Excellency Mr. Sidiki Kaba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, who, because of a last-minute scheduling conflict, was not able to participate, as he had planned to do.

Our delegation would like to thank the United States of America for having requested this meeting and the Ethiopian presidency for having facilitated its convening. We also thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, whose very important statement has shed light on our work.

Our debate today is a topical one, given recent events, which constantly remind us of the pressing nature of the terrorist threat and the growing risk of seeing non-State actors acquire nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Indeed, the rapid progress of science and technology, as well as globalization, facilitated by ongoing developments in the world of business, all are new factors that non-State actors could use to help them acquire weapons of mass destruction. This is demonstrated on the one hand by the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East and in Asia and, on the other, by issues related to cybersecurity, whose consequences could be even more serious if they were to be attacks aimed at critical infrastructure such as nuclear power plants.

Meanwhile, on the Korean peninsula, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is methodically pursuing its military nuclear programme in deliberate violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, with the objective of developing nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, which seriously undermines the non-proliferation regime and exacerbates tension in the region and beyond.

All of this clearly reflects the need to rigorously implement the commitments contained in the various relevant resolutions. Indeed, in the absence of genuine political will to put a term to it, the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will continue to grow.

In the light of all these factors, my country condemned as firmly as is possible the launch, for the second time in less than a month, of a North Korean ballistic missile, which flew over the Japanese island of Hokkaido before crashing into the Pacific. The launch took place less than a week after the adoption by the Council of resolution 2375 (2017), which condemned North Korea's sixth nuclear test, on 3 September.

The targeted measures rightly adopted in the previous resolution of the Council against North Korea must, in order to meet the challenge posed by the North Korean ballistic and nuclear programme, be part of a comprehensive political strategy that would prompt the parties to engage, with the assistance of the international community, in a frank dialogue whose ultimate

objective would be respect by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its international obligations and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

That is why my country, in reiterating our commitment to a peaceful and diplomatic settlement of the Korean crisis, calls once again for a resumption of a direct dialogue between the parties so as to create conditions conducive to peaceful coexistence between the countries and the peoples of the region.

Right now, the challenge to be met by all of us — States, international organizations and the business world — remains that of implementing the current sanctions measures, because failure to do so provides the North Korean authorities with sizable loopholes that they are systematically using to mobilize the resources necessary to pursue their illegal and dangerous programme.

We must work to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by making it universal and by promoting respect for previously reached commitments. Senegal remains convinced that working for the universalization of the NPT and the implementation of its relevant provisions, as well as acting in a resolute manner to secure the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, constitute decisive steps on the path towards general and complete disarmament.

Furthermore, it is now more necessary than ever to draw up a detailed inventory of all sources of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world so as to ensure that they are systematically placed under safeguards or destroyed. Significant measures have already been taken to this end, but a great deal remains to be done.

In an interdependent world, where our interests are linked together, strengthening cooperation in the areas of border controls, the monitoring of financial flows and Internet activity and legal assistance is more necessary than ever if we are to develop an aggressive preventive strategy designed to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the wrong hands. Of necessity, that involves not just sharing experience but working to synergize the efforts of all the stakeholders concerned.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interrelated and dialectically linked goals. It is therefore meaningless to speak of general and complete disarmament when, in addition to the nuclear-weapon States that already exist, there are others that are circumventing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons so as to acquire such weapons. Our work on nuclear non-proliferation must therefore must go hand in hand with the effective implementation of disarmament, according to a verifiable and irreversible timetable. To that end, our initiatives should focus on the multilateral framework that the United Nations system offers.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will begin by stating frankly that we were surprised by the inclusion of the issue of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the context of country-specific topics. There are other, more inclusive, formats for that. In our view, the most appropriate format for Security Council meetings on non-proliferation is one involving a discussion of general principles for solving the problem rather than picking fights with States that have had the misfortune to be designated so-called rogue countries by individual members of the Council. That is the approach in the concept note from the United States delegation, which artificially links three country situations that have nothing in common. To understand the essence of what is happening, a brief history lesson is in order.

Russia and the United States were at the forefront of developing the concept of international cooperation aimed at preventing weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of non-State actors, as embodied in resolution 1540 (2004). Our countries affirmed the importance of setting up a judicial and law-enforcement bulwark designed to prevent such evils through intergovernmental cooperation. Thereafter, however, the landscape began to change significantly, and the concept was sacrificed to the geopolitical manoeuvres of some of our partners, leading to acute destabilization in a number of regions around the world. We are all well aware of what the result of exploiting non-proliferation mechanisms to put pressure unpopular regimes was. The fate of Saddam Hussein, who, as we know, had no weapons of mass destruction but was accused of possessing them, and of Muammar Al-Qadhafi, who voluntarily gave up his own programme, became a pretext for certain States to accelerate their programmes for developing weapons of mass destruction. While that in no way justifies the nuclear-missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is short-

sighted to ignore or fail to understand the reasons behind it.

Taking advantage of the externally generated chaos — and sometimes military interventions, such as in Syria, Iraq and Libya — extremists of all stripes have been granted a broad range of opportunities for acquiring and making use of weapons of mass destruction. What is that if not a gross violation of resolution 1540 (2004)?

An unprecedented new challenge has emerged. Attempts to get the Security Council to at least pay attention to various glaring facts, let alone take action, continue to be deliberately blocked without any serious justification. Consider, for example, that resolution 2118 (2013) includes a provision obliging Governments that are neighbours of Syria to inform the Security Council immediately of any attempts by non-State actors to acquire weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery. Judging from the lack of any such reports to the Council, one might suppose that the problem simply does not exist. However, our attempts to raise that issue in the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) were firmly suppressed by our Western partners. We have repeatedly heard about the use of poisonous substances by combatants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other groups. There are reports of their access to both the technologies and infrastructure needed to manufacture such weapons. Such problems should be thoroughly investigated by the Security Council, but thanks to the efforts of some of our partners, they continue to be passed over in silence.

Let us speak frankly. Syria no longer has any Government chemical-weapon programmes, and the task of ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Syria is now limited to preventing them from falling into the hands of non-State actors. As far as we know, no one has presented convincing evidence to the contrary to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Moreover, the Russian-Syrian proposals for conducting a comprehensive investigation of the United States version of the tragic events of April in Khan Shaykhun were met with active opposition. The result is that so-called reliable reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons at Syria's Al-Shayrat airbase, which was used to justify an act of aggression against a State Member of the United Nations, has still not been confirmed by OPCW inspectors or experts from the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, despite the fact that the facility has been open to them since April. We firmly believe that it is the efforts by a number of our partners to force the facts of these matters to fit the Procrustean bed of their political purposes that constitute the main reasons for the appearance in the Middle East and North Africa of the chimera of chemical terrorism, which has begun to abate only since the Syrian people have made a major breakthrough in the fight against terrorism.

We believe that the key to an effective WMD non-proliferation regime lies in renouncing interference in the internal affairs of States and the policy of overthrowing unpopular regimes, as well as in establishing a unified and indivisible security system for all countries, without exception. If the those issues are not dealt with, the Security Council's non-proliferation sanctions will merely freeze the current issues without helping to resolve them for good, especially at a time when the Council's primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security is being undermined by the introduction of illegitimate, unilateral measures.

We have seen the effectiveness of respect for those principles in the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which has become a symbol of the triumph of multilateral diplomacy and an affirmation of our ability to settle highly complex problems through negotiation as long as the requisite political will exists. The information-sharing, verification and control mechanisms developed within the framework of the JCPOA are enabling us to make progress on a path to a broader conclusion by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as to the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. Based on regular inspections, the Agency has confirmed that Iran is fully complying with its obligations. We were surprised today to learn from the United States Secretary of State that Russia is apparently undermining the IAEA. That is, of course, news to us. Unfortunately, we have recently seen irresponsible, unilateral attempts to torpedo that breakthrough collective agreement. We hope that common sense will prevail in the end, and that the Plan will be allowed to become fully operational, thereby allowing it to reach its full potential. In that regard, implementation of their voluntary commitments in good faith by all States Parties to the JCPOA is key.

At the beginning of my statement, I said that these country situations are not linked to one another, but I would like to correct myself. Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea became

linked today, because a withdrawal from the JCPOA by the United States would be the worst possible signal we could send to North Korea. Similar and even more intensive diplomatic efforts are now needed on the Korean peninsula. We need to start now so as not to waste any more time or wait for the logic of confrontation to prevail. We are convinced that the reasons for the tensions on the peninsula are not just Pyongyang's nuclear-missile programme and the pretext it creates for heightened military activity in the region but are also the result of the lack of mechanisms providing a single and indivisible security system for every country in North-East Asia. It is clear that without such mechanisms, a political and diplomatic settlement of the problems on the Korean peninsula is impossible. We do see a solution in the implementation of the Russian-Chinese initiative, which at present is the only plan of action on the table. It would be a step in the right direction if the Security Council endorsed the well-known "four nos" concept, spelled out by Secretary of State Tillerson, who is present here today.

In conclusion, I would once again like to stress that the future prospects for non-proliferation cannot be considered in isolation from the overall strategic context. Realpolitik presupposes that all factors with a bearing on strategic stability and international security must be considered. Among others, they include the continuing establishment by the United States of global missile defence systems and NATO's joint nuclear missions, which it carries out in violation of articles I and II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Strengthening the WMD non-proliferation regime is important to Russia, and we will do our utmost in support of that goal, with a focus on active cooperation with our regional and international partners.

**Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing. We would also like to welcome Her Excellency Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, to the Security Council.

The immeasurable destructive power of nuclear weapons means that it is now imperative that the legal ban on nuclear war be strictly adhered to in practice if we are to ensure the survival of civilization and humankind itself. Because of their permanent radioactivity, nuclear weapons, whose terrible and indiscriminate effects are inevitably felt by military personnel and civilians alike, represent a threat to humankind's very survival and could ultimately render the entire Earth uninhabitable, as is stated in the preamble of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, otherwise known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

I am from that region, the first in the world to declare itself a zone of peace. Bolivia, a constitutionally pacifist State, promotes a culture of dialogue and the right to peace, as well as cooperation among the peoples of the world, with full respect for sovereignty, through diplomacy among peoples. Our Constitution prohibits the manufacture or use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons on Bolivian soil. We once again urge all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to stop including nuclear weapons in their doctrines, security policies, military strategies, political discourse and arsenals.

During its presidency of the Security Council in June, Bolivia convened an open debate entitled "The global effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors" (see S/PV.7985), with the goal of determining how to strengthen the preventive system so as to avoid the humanitarian, political, economic and environmental catastrophes that could result from the use of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons by non-State actors, particularly terrorist groups. We firmly believe that resolution 1540 (2004) is a platform for providing assistance and fostering cooperation among States to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological or nuclear. However, we completely disagree with that fact that it is very often used as a mechanism to put pressure or impose sanctions on States.

Once again, Bolivia firmly condemns the ballistic-missile launches and nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we call on it to abandon its nuclear and ballistic-missile programme in a comprehensive, verifiable and irreversible manner, in line with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We reject any act of provocation, unilateral measure or any measure not sanctioned by international law or that flouts the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which could pose a threat to international peace and security, especially on the Korean peninsula. That is why we encourage all

the parties concerned to avoid escalating tensions and rhetoric. We call for an end to the downward spiral of confrontation, the threat of the use of force or war, of nuclear retaliation or of the complete destruction of one or other of the parties.

It must be understood that there can be no military solution to the situation on the Korean peninsula. We echo the words of the Secretary-General, who said, based on resolution 2375 (2017),

> "[t]he solution must be political... We must not sleepwalk our way into war. More broadly, all countries must show greater commitment to the universal goal of a world without nuclear weapons." (*A/72/PV.3, p. 1*)

So far this year, the Security Council has adopted three resolutions with increasingly stringent sanctions, which may have various distinct consequences. As the resolutions stipulate, we believe that not only must we work to implement the sanctions, we must also work to bring the parties to the negotiating table and resume the Six-Party Talks. In that regard, Bolivia reiterates its support for the Chinese "suspension-for-suspension" initiative, which would allow for a simultaneous cessation of hostilities on the Korean peninsula, as well as the Chinese-Russian proposal and road map, which, to date, is the only concrete proposal that has been put forward to resolve the situation.

It is important to highlight the major achievements that have been made in the area of non-proliferation through dialogue and peaceful means. The most poignant example is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, which was negotiated by the five permanent members of the Security Council, the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency. It highlighted the willingness of the parties to achieve the goal of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. All reports, including from international organizations, indicate that Iran is honouring its commitment. That is why we want to draw attention to the fact that one of the parties is threatening to renege on that commitment and cause more instability in the region. It is critical to ensure that we learn from the past and do not use the putative presence or absence of weapons of mass destruction as a pretext for effecting regime change or destroying States.

I would like to conclude by reading two of the preambular paragraphs of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was opened for signature yesterday.

> "Mindful of the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons ...
>
> "Recalling that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, and that the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security are to be promoted with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

Article I of the Treaty states that each State party to it undertakes never under any circumstances to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.

Only two days ago, Secretary-General António Guterres, in his remarks at the opening of the General Assembly, told us that "global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War" (*A/72/PV.3, p. 1*). It is impossible to disagree with that assessment. Indeed, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is posing serious threat to global peace and security. Nowhere has this danger become more pressing than in the current situation surrounding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In this context, I should like to underline the following three points.

First, it is important to comprehensively address risks of proliferation through political and diplomatic means aimed at finding a negotiated solution. The modality through which the States participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) managed to address the Iranian nuclear issue is indeed a significant achievement for multilateralism. The JCPOA and the follow-up mechanism of the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), as well as the progress registered so far in the implementation of the JCPOA, have taught us a very important lesson. By that, I mean that what was achieved amounted to being an example for how pressing issues of peace

and security can be addressed through diplomatic means. Of course, we recognize that much more needs to be done by the participating States in clearing up misunderstandings and avoiding any possible obstacles to the full implementation of the JCPOA.

Secondly, based on the lessons learned from the JCPOA and the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), the Security Council and the international community might have to explore mechanisms to address the serious and imminent threat posed by the nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The continued provocative activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should not be a cause for weakening the unity within the Council, which is so critical to effectively pursuing our broader objective of addressing the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This brings me to my third point on the broader threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This has to do with the now very possible scenario of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-State actors and the real and present danger this poses to international peace and security and to humanind. Multilateral agreements, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, continue to contribute immensely to the prevention and elimination of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They need to be adhered to in a scrupulous manner. But still, much more needs to be done to ensure universal accession to and the full implementation of such agreements. Regional nuclear-free zones, such as the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, also remain central to the global and regional non-proliferation regime and the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Security Council plays a critical role in addressing the serious threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by using all the available tools at its disposal, including through sanctions. However, all of us should be able to fully implement Council measures if they are to meet their intended objectives. I would therefore like to conclude my remarks by affirming Ethiopia's commitment to working towards that objective.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Her Excellency Ms. Kang Kyun-wha, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

**Ms. Kang** (Republic of Korea): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to speak to the Council. I also thank Secretary Tillerson for calling for the meeting and Under-Secretary-General Namamitsu for her briefing.

It is a great honour for me to return to the Council, although under very different circumstances and with very different responsibilities. I shall be brief, as it is late in the day.

Let me start by reaffirming my Government's strong commitment to strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. As outgoing Chair of both the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime, we have led the strengthening of the multilateral export control regime. We have also been a strong advocate of countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-State actors by supporting efforts to build an enduring nuclear security architecture and implementing relevant Security Council resolutions. Not least, we continue to work with the international community to make meaningful progress in the run-up to the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Although I could elaborate futher on my Government's efforts in field of the non-proliferation of WMDs, I am compelled on this occasion to focus on the single topic that poses the most urgent and grave threat to the international non-proliferation regime — that is, North Korea's nuclear and missiles threat.

Last year, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and launched 24 ballistic missiles. This year, during a period of less than nine months, North Korea conducted another nuclear test and launched 19 ballistic missiles. On average, since 2016 North Korea has launched two ballistic missiles every month. The most recent, sixth nuclear test, on 3 September, was especially alarming, with its explosive yield far exceeding the sum of all five previous tests and North Korea claiming it as a hydrogen bomb to be mounted on an intercontinental ballistic missile. The Security Council quickly responded with the strongest ever resolution — resolution 2375 (2017) — but the ink was barely dry on that new resolution when North Korea launched yet another

ballistic missile launch, which flew a distance of 3,700 kilometres over Japan into the Pacific.

The international community has reacted firmly and rapidly to the latest provocations by North Korea. In addition to the quick adoption of the new Security Council resolution, numerous countries and international organizations have strongly condemned North Korea and taken unilateral measures. The Republic of Korea appreciates and welcomes the firm actions taken by the international community. North Korea must be stopped. North Korea must be made to understand that continued provocations will only deepen its diplomatic isolation and intensify the economic pressure that will lead the regime to ruin. Denuclearization is the only path to a secure and stable future for the North.

Since the first nuclear test by North Korea in 2006, nine Security Council resolutions have been adopted. With repeated provocations and resolutions, it is perhaps easy to lose the sense of urgency around the issue. Perhaps it has become routine. But we must not let that happen. Indeed, the urgency of the issue is heightened by the day and by the week. We may be rapidly approaching a point of no return. The North Korean leader is quoted as saying that North Korea is indeed in the final stages of nuclear weaponization and that it will clearly demonstrate to the world that this goal will be achieved despite endless sanctions. Further troubling is the potential for the proliferation of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles, which would deal a crippling blow to the international non-proliferation regimes.

Thus, with a renewed sense of urgency, we must ensure now more than ever the full implementation of the Security Council's resolutions, which include sanctions on North Korean coal, iron, fisheries, textiles and overseas labourers, as well as a steep cut in refined petroleum products going into the North. Fully implemented, these sanctions will have a significant impact and force a change of course on the North Korean regime.

Let me reiterate, however, that the sanctions are not an end in themselves or to bring North Korea down, but to bring it to the negotiating table for denuclearization. In that regard, we deeply appreciate the active efforts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) and its Chair.

Even now, North Korea is continuing its reckless drive towards nuclear weaponization, testing the resolve of the international community. We can only go as fast and as effectively as the slowest link among us. North Korea will try to take advantage of the weakest link among us to defeat the Council's resolve and decisions. Therefore, the Council members and the international community must stand together in implementing the sanctions and in sending the unequivocal message to North Korea that it will pay painfully and dearly for its provocations, and its nuclear weapons programme will never be accepted.

Let me emphasize that our common goal is to achieve the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korean nuclear programme in a peaceful manner. The Republic of Korea will work assiduously and tirelessly to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea and the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean peninsula. We will work closely with all to that end.

I would like to conclude with a message to North Korea, which I am sure is shared by the Council as a whole: "Come to the right side of history."

*The meeting rose at 7 p.m.*